STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR ALI GEREISHA TO A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD IN LONDON ON 10 MARCH 1982

Professor Ali Gereisha, one of the lawyers defending the accused in the Sadat assassination case, today called on President Mubarak of Egypt to annul the verdicts reached by the Military Court and to order a re-trial before a Civil Court.

Addressing a Press Conference in London, Mr Gereisha said that the judgement given by the Military Court was a violation of human rights. Enumerating the reasons for his stand, he said that:

a) the case against the accused was filed before a Military Court instead of a Civil Court;

b) the Minister of Defence, General Abou Ghazala, declared on American television, before the proceedings even began, that the alleged assassins of Sadat would be executed;

c) the Judges of the Military Court were prejudiced against the accused, as is clear from the following facts:

1. they refused all demands by the defence lawyers to call witnesses in testimony for the defendants;

2. they refused all challenges by the defence lawyers as to the competence and legality of the court;

3. they imposed a time limit on the defence lawyers leaving them insufficient time to put their case;

4. on 1 March, Mr Abdel-Halim Ramadan, the lawyer for the main defendant, Lt. Khalid El-Estambouli, was himself arrested for insulting the court when he appealed to the High Constitutional Court on the incompetence of the Court Martial to try the defendants. Mr Ramadan now faces criminal proceedings himself, and trial before a Military Court, in violation of the immunity of lawyers during legal proceedings. When all the defence lawyers boycotted the proceedings as a consequence, the court appointed 4 other lawyers to defend 13 defendants for the remaining day of the trial.

5. The court allowed only 3 days for summing up before the decision was reached on 6 March, although some 3500 pages detailed the case.

Mr Gereisha concluded with the following statement:

" I, as a Muslim, as an Egyptian, and as one of the Counsel for the defence, do hereby declare:

1. that the hearing by Court Martial was unsuitable from the beginning, and became illegal on the declaration of the Minister for Defence;

2. the conduct of the court was contrary to judicial custom and against due justice and impartiality;

3. the conduct of the court in its final proceedings constitutes aggression against the right of defence and against human rights.

I appeal to all judicial and legal organisations, to all Syndicates of Lawyers, to Human Rights' organisations all over the world, to intervene immediately to protect Human Rights and to aid the oppressed people of Egypt."